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99TH CONGRESS
2d Session

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

REPT. 99-674,
Part 1

ORIGINAL

ADJUSTING THE BOUNDARIES OF AREAS OF THE NATIONAL WILDERNESS PRESERVATION SYSTEM IN THE STATE OF TEXAS

JULY 15, 1986.—Ordered to be printed

Mr. UDALL, from the Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs, submitted the following

REPORT

[To accompany H.R. 4685]

[Including the cost estimate of the Congressional Budget Office]

The Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs, to whom was referred the bill (H.R. 4685) to adjust the boundaries of areas of the National Wilderness Preservation System in the State of Texas, having considered the same, report favorably thereon with an amendment and recommend that the bill as amended do pass.

The amendment is as follows: Page 2, line 2, change "April" to "June".

PURPOSE

H.R. 4685,[1] as amended, would make minor changes in the boundaries of the five wilderness areas on national forest lands in the State of Texas. These changes would, in net, add approximately 1,700 acres to the National Wilderness Preservation System.

BACKGROUND AND NEED

H.R. 4685 would modify the boundaries of the five National Forest wilderness areas in Texas. These boundary changes have two purposes. The first is to increase the manageability of these wilderness areas by evening out jagged boundaries, and by moving the boundaries to make them more easily signed and recognizable.

[1] H.R. 4685 was cosponsored by Representatives Wilson, Barton, and Bryant.

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The second is to enable the addition to wilderness of small but ecologically and recreationally significant tracts of land which are outside but adjacent to the wilderness boundaries enacted in 1984. Since 1984, some of these lands have been acquired by a private conservation group specifically for addition to the wilderness. The boundary changes in H.R. 4685 will allow that to happen.

The committee notes that most, if not all, of the private lands within the wilderness additions made by H.R. 4685 could be acquired by land trades, rather than by purchase, and encourages the Forest Service to pursue such trades.

The net change of the boundary adjustments incorporated in H.R. 4685 would be an addition of 1,770 acres to the five wilderness areas, which currently total 34,346 acres. Of the 1,770 acres, 1,080 acres are already owned by the Forest Service; the remaining 690 acres are currently privately owned.

Most of the mineral rights underlying the national forests of Texas are owned by private parties. The Secretary of Agriculture has the power to reasonably regulate access across forest lands, including wilderness areas, to protect their surface values. But the committee wishes to reemphasize that the wilderness additions made in this bill are subject to valid private rights existing at the time of the designation, including mineral rights, and that mineral rights, like any private property within the boundaries of designated wilderness areas, are not subject to condemnation by the Secretary.

The wilderness areas affected by H.R. 4685 lie in the districts of Representatives Charles Wilson, Joe Barton, and Jim Chapman. Representatives Wilson and Barton, along with their colleagues from Texas, Representatives John Bryant and Steve Bartlett, submitted testimony in favor of the bill to the Public Lands Subcommittee.

THE COMMITTEE AMENDMENT

By unanimous consent, the committee incorporated an amendment of a technical and conforming nature to H.R. 4685. The amendment consisted of changing the dates of the official maps referenced on page 2, line 2 of the bill from April 1986 to June 1986. This was done to reflect the adoption of maps drawn at the time of the subcommittee mark-up as the official maps for this bill. These maps incorporate a greater level of detail than the maps referenced in the bill as introduced.

SECTION-BY-SECTION ANALYSIS

Section 1 entitles the bill the "Texas Wilderness Act Amendments of 1986."

Section 2 modifies the boundaries of the wilderness areas designated by the Texas Wilderness Act of 1984 as shown on maps referenced by the bill.

Section 3 contains the standard language of all wilderness bills pertaining to the filing of maps and legal descriptions of the wilderness boundaries proposed in H.R. 4685.

COST AND INFLATIONARY IMPACT

Pursuant to clause 2(l)(4) of rule XI of the Rules of the House of Representatives, the committee finds that enactment of H.R. 4685 will have no inflationary impact on the national economy. The analysis of the Congressional Budget Office on the costs of this legislation follows:

U.S. CONGRESS,
CONGRESSIONAL BUDGET OFFICE,
Washington, DC, June 23, 1986.

Hon. MORRIS K. UDALL,
Chairman, Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs, House of Representatives, Washington, DC.

DEAR MR. CHAIRMAN: The Congressional Budget Office has reviewed H.R. 4685, the Texas Wilderness Act Amendments of 1986, as ordered reported by the House Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs, June 18, 1986. This estimate supersedes our cost estimate of June 19, 1986.

This bill would extend the boundaries of wilderness areas in the Crockett, Sabine, Houston, and Angelina National Forests to include 1,080 acres of public land now managed by the Forest Service and 690 acres of private land. Subject to the approval of the current owners, the private land would be acquired by exchanging public land managed by the Forest Service for the private land parcels.

Based on information from the Forest Service, and assuming the land exchanges can be negotiated, CBO expects that enactment of this bill would result in no significant cost to the federal government and would not affect the budgets of state or local governments. If land exchanges could not be consummated and it were necessary to purchase the private land, CBO estimates that acquisition costs would be approximately $750,000.

If you wish further details on this estimate, we will be pleased to provide them.

With best wishes,
Sincerely,

RUDOLPH G. PENNER, *Director.*

OVERSIGHT STATEMENT

While Subcommittee on Public Lands conducted hearings on the legislation, no oversight hearings were held separately. No recommendations were received by the committee pursuant to rule X, clause 2(b)(2).

LEGISLATIVE HISTORY

On June 5, 1986, the Subcommittee on Public Lands held a hearing in Washington, DC on H.R. 4685.

On June 12, 1986, the Subcommittee on Public Lands reported H.R. 4685 favorably to the Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs by voice vote.

COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION

On June 18, 1986, the Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs ordered H.R. 4685, as amended, reported favorably to the House by voice vote.

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